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Pisa Program: A Path to Improving the Quality of Education in Uzbekistan

Maftuna Nazarbekovna Babanazarova

Bukhara State Pedagogical Institute

ABSTRACT

The education system is a crucial aspect of the socio-economic development of a country. In Uzbekistan, the government places significant emphasis on the advancement of education and strives to enhance its quality. In this context, Uzbekistan's participation in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) represents a strategically important step towards improving the education system and achieving global standards. This article will examine the impact of the PISA program on the assessment of the quality of education in the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Keywords:

Education system, PISA program, educators, students, professional development

Introduction. The possibility for children to achieve a social status surpassing that of their parents is influenced by numerous factors, including health, socio-cultural capital, level of education, and trends in the labor market [1]. Despite individual efforts contributing to upward mobility, the likelihood of a person from a disadvantaged family achieving success in life also depends on factors such as place of residence and socio-cultural affiliation [2,3]. In a longitudinal analysis of data from the period of 2012 in five developed countries, a close correlation was found between the academic achievements of students in PISA and their outcomes in early adulthood. Fifteen-year-old students demonstrating higher proficiency in reading skills have a 38-53 percentage point higher likelihood of successfully completing university compared to those who scored lower. Differences in academic performance among fifteen-year-old students account for 27% to 43% of the variance in the likelihood of attaining higher education between students from different socio-economic groups. This

suggests that improving the curriculum during compulsory schooling can contribute to increased educational mobility [11]. One way in which teachers can support students' well-being is by helping them recognize the importance of what they are studying. Encouraging students to consider how new topics can be applied in their everyday lives and how this information can be useful to others can help them discover greater value in the learning process and develop a deeper motivation for learning [13]. In addition to further education, performance at age 15 is also linked to opportunities for skilled employment. Students in the top quartile of reading proficiency are 24-47 percentage points more likely to work in a job requiring higher education by the age of 25, compared to students in the lowest quartile of proficiency. These results suggest that performance in middle school is important not only for further education but also for shaping opportunities in the labor market in early adulthood [12].

In pursuit of this goal, internationally developed countries come to a consensus that the development and future of a country depend on the younger generation. To address this, the consortium of the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), with active collaboration from the Dutch National Institute for Educational Measurement (CITO), the U.S. Educational Testing Service (ETS), the National Institute for Educational Research (NIER) in Japan, Westat in the U.S., and other globally respected educational organizations, developed the PISA test in 1997, first administered in 2000 [4]. This test evaluates the knowledge of school-aged children, specifically those aged 15-16.

If students receive poor grades and struggle with academic performance, it may reinforce the influence of negative social expectations on their belief in their ability to attain higher education. Additionally, the academic performance of 15-year-old students is not necessarily a direct indicator of their desire to pursue higher education. Other factors, such as family income, may also influence the decision to enroll in university [5]. In this case, the observed correlation between PISA performance and university completion should not be interpreted as causal.

PISA is a program conducted by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) every three years, which assesses the level of education of students worldwide. It measures the knowledge and skills of students in reading, mathematics, and natural sciences. Participation in PISA allows countries to compare their results with global standards and identify areas in need of improvement. In order to determine priority directions for systemic reform of general and extracurricular education in the Republic of Uzbekistan, elevate the spiritual, moral, and intellectual development of the younger generation to a qualitatively new level, and introduce innovative forms and methods of teaching into the educational process, in accordance with the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated September 5, 2018, No. UP-5538 "On additional measures to improve the system of public education," the concept of Uzbekistan's entry into the top 30

leading countries in the world by the 2030 ranking of the PISA international student assessment program was approved [6].

PISA is an international study that evaluates students' abilities to apply knowledge and skills, as well as their ability to analyze, reason, and communicate. It does not advocate for any specific curriculum and does not seek to find common denominators. In 2018, PISA focused on assessing reading skills, considered crucial for successful participation in knowledge-based and digital societies.

The main advantage of PISA lies in its global coverage and regular administration. More than 90 countries and economies participate in this study, and its triennial implementation allows countries and economies to track their progress in achieving educational goals. PISA is the only international study that evaluates the knowledge and skills of 15-year-old students, making it a valuable tool for comparing educational systems worldwide.

PISA is a unique study capable of making a significant contribution to the development of state educational policy. Its methodology provides valuable data on how effectively schools prepare young people for adult life and assesses the effectiveness of various teaching methods. Additionally, PISA analyzes how educational institutions can assist students from disadvantaged families or immigrants.

The distinctive feature of PISA is that it does not focus on specific curricula but, instead, measures students' ability to apply their knowledge and skills in various subject areas. It also evaluates their analytical abilities, reasoning skills, and problem-solving capabilities.

Furthermore, PISA is involved in studying the lifelong learning process. Understanding how and why we learn is essential because students cannot encompass all the necessary knowledge within the school curriculum alone. PISA assesses not only the educational attainment of students but also their motivation, self-assessment, and learning strategies [10].

Objective: To identify the positive qualities of the PISA program for the education system in the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Research Methods: The research involves analysis and statistical overview of literary data.

Results and Discussion: In the Republic of Uzbekistan, significant importance is given to the development of the educational system, recognized as a key direction of state policy. The process of reforming this crucial sector, which influences the long-term prospects of the state, is being carried out in stages. One of the seven priority directions of the Development Strategy of the New Uzbekistan for the period 2022-2026 is defined as the development of human capital. Goals 43 and 44 of this strategy encompass the improvement of the quality of education in schools and the training of pedagogical personnel in line with global standards of knowledge and qualifications [7].

Currently, the Republic of Uzbekistan does not participate in the PISA study. However, in recent years, active efforts have been made in the country to enhance the educational system. As part of the education reform, new teaching methods are being implemented, and there is an improvement in the quality of teaching and assessment of students' knowledge. A significant part of these changes involves raising the level of students' competencies and preparing them for successful adaptation in modern society [8].

Students from different socio-economic segments often experience differences in transitioning from education to employment. Students from more privileged social groups typically start their careers with less intensive employment, either during their secondary school education or immediately after its completion. This provides them with more time and opportunities to focus on their academic performance and the development of professional skills. In contrast, students from less affluent families are more likely to enter the workforce at an earlier age and with more intensive workloads, which can ultimately have a limiting impact on their potential to achieve a high level of education and long-term career growth [9].

Students in disadvantaged conditions are more likely to accept employment offers that entail

lower compensation levels, job security, and career development prospects. This exposes them to an increased risk of periods of unemployment and passivity in the labor market. An analysis of data at the initial stages of professional careers reveals significant differences depending on the level of education of parents.

PISA focuses on assessing students' proficiency in reading, mathematics, and natural sciences, as they are fundamental to a student's continuous education. PISA also gathers valuable information about students' attitudes and motivations, and formally evaluates skills such as collaborative problem-solving and global competence. It also explores the potential for assessing other important skills related, for example, to creative thinking.

Uzbekistan's participation in the PISA program, in our opinion, can bring the following benefits:

1. Objective evaluation of the education system: We will be able to obtain an objective assessment of our education system using an internationally recognized tool. PISA results will help identify the strengths and weaknesses of the education system and pinpoint areas that require further improvement.
2. Comparison to global standards: The Republic of Uzbekistan will be able to compare its results with those of other countries participating in the program. This will allow for an assessment of the level of education of students in the country compared to global standards and enable appropriate decision-making.
3. Improvement of education quality: Participation in the program can serve as an incentive for Uzbekistan to enhance the quality of its education system. This contributes to improving the quality of education and preparing students for global challenges.
4. International recognition: Participation in the PISA program will grant Uzbekistan international recognition in the field of education. This may attract the attention of international organizations and partners, as well as facilitate the mobilization of funding and expert assistance for the development of the education system.
5. Improvement of international ranking: Participation in the PISA program and achieving

good results can help Uzbekistan improve its international ranking in the field of education. This may attract more students and researchers from other countries, contributing to the development of the country's educational sector.

6. Additionally, PISA contributes to raising awareness about education both within and beyond the country's borders. Participation in the program provides an opportunity to exchange experiences with other participants and contribute to the international educational community.

Conclusion:

Thus, it appears that PISA represents a valuable tool for analyzing and improving educational systems both in the Republic of Uzbekistan and in the global context. Its global coverage, diverse measurements, analytical reports, and encouragement of research and innovation make it an integral mechanism for countries aiming to enhance their educational systems. PISA provides the opportunity to identify strengths and weaknesses, as well as develop strategies to improve the quality of education and prepare students for modern challenges and requirements. Participation in PISA allows a country to obtain an objective assessment, make comparisons with global standards, and identify areas requiring refinement. This can contribute to raising the level of education, strengthening international recognition, and improving Uzbekistan's position in global education rankings.

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